

18th International Conference on

Nursing & Healthcare

December 05-07, 2016 Dallas, USA

Increasing diversity of undergraduate nursing students in baccalaureate nursing programs

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Despite the increased diversity and multicultural transformation of the population within the United States, the majority of nurses in the workforce are found to be educated from Caucasian backgrounds. At present, there is minimal inclusion of students from underrepresented ethnic minorities, as well as students from the rural Appalachian region. This presentation describes an innovative and creative mentoring program that was implemented at a university to increase the diversity of the student enrollment in nursing. Through the use of specially trained nurses from the community, students received specialized mentoring, guidance and encouragement for academic and social success. Additionally, students received academic scholarships and monthly stipends to help eliminate financial hardships. With the guidance of the nursing mentors with students, there was an increase in the acceptance rate of underrepresented ethnic minorities and rural Appalachian students for the School of Nursing program. Programs such as these may prove to be beneficial in helping to integrate a diversity of nursing professionals into the nursing workforce in the United States.

Biography

Sharon Elizabeth Metcalfe is currently the Program Director for the NN-CAT (Nursing Network-Careers and Technology Program) Nursing Mentoring and Diversity Program at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina. Dr. Metcalfe is additionally an Associate Professor of Nursing. Dr. Metcalfe has published numerous international articles on mentoring of students, nurses and additionally leads a collaborative mentoring program with nursing students and nurses between Western Carolina University and the Edinburgh Napier University with Schools of Nursing, with student exchanges with nurse mentors.

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